

JUSTICEWORKS • JOURNAL

A quarterly newsletter published by Justiceworks, Ltd, a non-profit community justice organization dedicated to advancing policies and practices of justice that create right relationships in the communities of Portage County. Volunteer task forces of Justiceworks consider issues of mentoring, victim/offender conferencing, substance-free housing, and access to justice. Justiceworks has received grants from the State Bar of Wisconsin, the Community Foundation, the Department of Justice, St. Bronislava Church, the Polish Legion of American Veterans, and the Wisconsin Humanities Board. Developing community involvement in the justice system requires substantial assistance and commitment. To join the effort please return the registration below with your pledge. All contributions are tax deductible as Justiceworks is a tax exempt organization under Sec. 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Justiceworks, PO Box 448, Stevens Point, WI 54481

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quote for a quarter:

“The law, in its majestic equality,
forbids the rich as well as the poor
to sleep under bridges,
to beg in the streets,
and to steal bread.”

~Anatole France



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PO BOX 448
STEVENS POINT WI 54481

Fostering forms of justice that strengthen and heal the communities of Portage County!

Justiceworks • Journal

Fostering Restorative Justice for Portage County

12/20/07

Riverside Residents: Getting to Know You

The Riverside House – a drug and alcohol free home for men in recovery in Portage County - has been open for just over two years. The stories of the men who live there have moved the Justiceworks board, and through the Justiceworks Journal we can share them with you.

The residents run the house democratically by electing officers to fulfill certain functions. The current House President Shawn, is one of those “comfortable people”, like your favorite pair of shoes. He has strong values, and morals. He’s handsome, bright, a hard worker, kind, considerate, has a great sense of humor, and he’s a recovering addict and alcoholic.

Shawn started smoking dope at 15, and drinking at 16. He spent the next 20 some years consumed with drugs and alcohol. A high school dropout, he spent time in the juvenile correction system, shelter houses, rehab programs, and jail. He began dealing drugs in Dane County, and left when his drugs and money were stolen. In trouble with his supplier and fearing for his life, Shawn bounced checks to get gas in his car and escape to Adams where his mother lived. He arrived with the clothes on his back, and 4 OWI’s. Within six months and with some “help” from a “friend” with a prescription for adderall, Shawn quickly reverted to his habit of three day binges of drugs and alcohol, without sleep or food.

After one such binge in 2004, Shawn woke up in the Portage County Jail, not remembering the accident and 5th OWI that brought him there. His mother posted bond for him and took him to the accident site. The accident scene and his car left nothing to the imagination, and Shawn, vowing not to drink again, entered an out patient treatment program. (Continued on page 5)

Restorative Justice: A definition by a former prisoner, an ordained minister, prison chaplain and faculty member of Queen’s University.

“There are hundreds of definitions of restorative justice. The one I lean toward has Jewish roots. One Rabbi describes it as addressing the hurts and needs of the victims, the hurts and needs of the offenders, in such a way that they and the community might be healed. . . .

The principles of restorative justice are important because they guide, advise and define the process. These principles include:

- Restorative justice begins with oneself. If one has not integrated the principles of restorative justice such as accountability, honesty, healing, justice and repentance one cannot succeed in restorative justice since one cannot give away what one does not have.
- Restorative justice initiatives are voluntary: all who apply them may not be ready or prepared.
- Each stakeholder, victim, offender and community has equal representation: they are the central resources.
- Restorative justice initiatives can be applied in any situation from the most serious crime, to a schoolyard conflict and to nations at war.
- The principle components of restorative justice initiatives are opportunity for all to speak, consensus on the consequences, freedom of emotional expression and commitment to create safer communities with more peaceful people in healed and restored relationships — as far as that is possible.
- Professionals and experts may suggest and assist in developing a restorative justice initiative but they play a peripheral role: the process is “owned” by the victim, the perpetrator and the community.
- Listening and truth telling are essential for success.
- Crime prevention is the penultimate goal of restorative justice.”

Rod Carter

continued from page 1, Riverside Residents:

Despite the vow however, Shawn's prescription drug abuse continued to fill the emptiness of a cocaine habit. After a dirty urine test in 2006, he returned to jail again and faced prison time. When counselor Mike Slavin visited Shawn in the jail, he asked a simple question. "Are you done yet?" For Shawn that question and the look into his eyes gave him the motivation to end the years of lies and abuse. He left jail, and entered an inpatient program.

Nearly two years later, Shawn continues to be done with that lifestyle. Clean and sober since then, he has gained back much to be thankful for. Now able to be the son his mother always knew he was, Shawn became the pillar at her side when she needed him most through a losing battle with cancer. Shawn regained his drivers license, recently obtained his GED, and has a good job supervising others. He has a safe place to come home where he knows he can count on others for friendship and support.

He relies on the House residents to hold him accountable, and his own hard work and dedication to sobriety keep him clean. The House can't keep you sober, but it does offer time, and a safe place to live. When he has thoughts about using, he comes home to the Riverside House. Some day Shawn will move out, but for now, and for as long as Shawn wants, he can stay provided he doesn't use, pays his fair share of rent and follows house expectations.

Continued from page 2, New Directors:

extensive experience both prosecuting and defending criminal cases. He believes that Justiceworks can provide exceptional services and alternatives to people who experience conflicts with the law and their consequences. The more choices available to the courts and people working in the system the better. "I would like in some small way to give back to the community, and provide all of us with a better and happier place to be."

The Board of Directors expects to appoint additional members in the coming months. Board service requires attendance at a monthly meeting and other involvement at committee meetings and on projects. Interested in serving on the Board of Director's of Justiceworks? Please call 344-3677.

NEW MEMBERS JOIN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Recently changes to the bylaws increased the numbers of Directors from a maximum of eleven to a maximum of twenty-one. Several new members have joined the Board since then.

Tom Davies owns Express Personnel Services, a staffing company that matches area companies and organizations with job seekers. Tom studied business at Whitewater and Oshkosh, and previously worked extensively with a company which manufactured and marketed equipment throughout the world. Tom says "I knew I wanted to deal business to business and work toward making a difference in people's lives."

Patti Malm serves as the Field Supervisor of Community Corrections in Stevens Point. Her purpose arises from her concern with the development of local, affordable, and assessable community-based resources and services available to corrections clients and those confined in the jail or prison.

Sharon Morell served the Stevens Point schools as a band director and music coordinator for 35 years. Sharon says "Five years ago, a former student of mine talked to my Bible study class about restorative justice and victim/offender mediation. I was fascinated with the topic, and knew it was something I wanted to pursue in retirement. I am look forward to bringing this interest to fruition."

David Knappen serves as an Assistant District Attorney for Portage County, and has been working as a prosecutor for an extended period. He describes his interest in Justiceworks from that perspective: "As a participant in the criminal justice system, I'm interested in finding other ways, and possibly better ways, of dealing with criminal conduct, particularly as a way of stopping recidivism. As a taxpayer, I'm interested in finding better ways of using our tax dollars to deal with criminal conduct, either to prevent it or prevent it from repeating itself."

Scott Roberts practices law privately in Stevens Point and has
(Continued on page5)

From the Executive Director's Desk:

Holiday time is upon us. It's a time for personal reflection and thankfulness, a cherished time to spend in the company of family and friends. Right around the corner is the New Year and a time to review our organizational goals as we look to new horizons:

Access to Justice: The Family Law Information Center now operates out of the Justiceworks offices over the noon hour on weekdays, and on the first Saturday of each month from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. In 2008, service hours will expand, and services will also be provided at the courthouse.

Community Reentry Services: The Justiceworks Board and the residents at the Riverside House, an alcohol and drug-free residence, have had more opportunities to exchange information regarding the needs of the residents and future initiatives. Together, the Board of Directors and the residents of Riverside House hosted a Holiday Open House to thank the community for continued encouragement and support. In 2008, the residents will be involved in speaking engagements to bring their personal stories to the community. Their message really drives home the need for more alcohol and drug-free living opportunities and the community support required to accomplish it.

Effective Justice Strategies: The Volunteers in Probation (VIP) program has expanded its volunteer mentor base with a recent two-part training session. The new mentors are a lively, experienced, and conscientious group of individuals. They will definitely be as challenging to the individuals they are matched with as these individuals will be to them! We hope to double the amount of offenders who are matched to VIP community mentors in 2008.

Employment initiative with PRISM and Justiceworks: The community will benefit from a better-coordinated system to address offender employment issues. Offenders need to maintain and improve their employment situations as they resolve legal problems to reenter the community as productive members. With expansion of the Justiceworks Board and our partnering efforts with the PRISM organization, we hope to develop an employment mentoring program to provide more integrated services to our community in 2008.

Mediation and Conferencing Services: We look forward to bringing mediation services on board in 2008. We will first address mediation regarding restitution issues. Without resolution of restitution issues between victims and offenders, it is more difficult to resolve other conflicts, reach resolutions, and conserve court resources. We will train the first set of mediation volunteers in early spring 2008.

Financial Sustainability: We are in the midst of strategic planning to develop a permanent funding base. We are looking at initiating an endowment fund and will continue to seek new grants. We will also expand our fundraising Justiceworks Run to incorporate a 5-K and Half-Marathon Run/Walk distance and a pre-race carbo-loading spaghetti dinner. So, in addition to restorative justice goals, please plan to incorporate our fundraising walk/run into your personal fitness goals for 2008.

Community Outreach and Education: Justiceworks has formed a partnership with our interfaith organizations to provide special music, speakers, food and activities in a community-wide event in observance of Martin Luther King Day. The event is open to the public and will be held at the Charles M. White Memorial Library on Monday, January 21st at 7:00 p.m.

As new Executive Director for Justiceworks, the year 2007 has been enriching for me from both a personal and professional context. In 2008, I will work with the Justiceworks Board, staff and community volunteers, to develop service initiatives in mediation and conferencing, expand service hours of the Family Law Information Center, examine the feasibility of employment mentoring, double the caseload for Volunteers in Probation, and educate community members on the status of the justice system. These initiatives will address the restorative justice needs for victims, offenders, and the community.

“One never notices what has been done; one can only see what has to be done.” Marie Curie

Happy Holidays,
Katherine Munck